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SKETCHES OF IRISH SCENERY AND MANNERS.*

In the review of works of a purely national character, we trust we shall be excused, though we occasionally travel back a year or two for valuable materials, or even venture sometimes to recur again, with more deliberate judgment, to works that may have previously come under a hasty notice in our former less responsible capacity of hebdomadal critics.

Since we have come to years of discretion and literary experience, we are apt to turn away from "Sketches," as things "flat," in the estimation of readers, and apt to become "stale and unprofitable" in the shops of the publishers. Mere description of scenery or character, however interesting as an adjunct, soon becomes wearisome by itself; it wants the life, the interest, the something that entwines itself with our sympathies, and rouses our passions, and bears us along, eager to discover more, which is to be found in the events of a well told story. Descriptive sketches affect us no more than mere paintings—we sit still, and look at them, as we do at a moving panorama; whereas, when descriptions are introduced as the scenery belonging to incidents real or imagined, in which we take a real or imaginary interest, we seem to ourselves to move within them—they form part of a train of circumstances in which we are not merely spectators, but by the force of imagination make ourselves actors. We not only see in our mind's eye, the solemn mountain, or the headlong stream, or the crowded street, or any thing else which may become the subject of description, but we feel them to be linked with associations that come home to us, to ourselves, as mingled either really or imaginatively, in the matters upon which the description has been superinduced. We doubt if even the appalling description of hell in the *Paradise Lost*, would pour into our soul the sense of terror and desolation that it does, were it not for our involuntary sympathy with those who have just been

Hurl'd headlong flaming from the ethereal sky,
With hideous ruin and combustion down
To bottomless perdition.

We are for the moment (God save us!) Satan himself! It is not merely that we catch a view of him and his infernal dungeon and dominion, through the telescope of our imagination, as we sit in our comfortably stuffed library chair, but we enter into his soul, as

— "Round he throws his baleful eyes
That witnessed huge affliction and dismay,
Mix'd with obdurate pride and steadfast hate,
At once, as far as angels ken he views
The dismal situation, waste and wild,
A dungeon horrible on all sides round
As one great furnace flamed; yet from those flames
No light, but rather darkness visible,
Served only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell; hope never comes,
That comes to all, but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge fed
With ever burning sulphur unconsumed."

* Sketches in the North and South of Ireland. 1 vol. post 8vo. Dublin.

Sketches of Irish Character. By Mrs. S. C. Hall. 2 vols. London.

Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry. 2 vols. Dublin.

The Denounced. By the Authors of "Tales by the O'Hara Family." 3 vols. London.

What would all these horrors be, if they were only to be looked at, not felt and endured? And how is it that the horrible sense of this endurance impresses itself upon the mind, but by the aid of the story, which at the same moment brings the scene, and the sufferings associated with it, under our contemplation.

To some, it may appear, that this little excursion to the infernal regions is rather out of our way, in arriving at a due estimation of the Irish Sketches, of which we are about to speak, but the judicious reader will not fail to perceive the connexion. Ireland may be considered as a sort of pleasure garden to the dwelling of his satanic majesty, the dismal "underground story" of which, we have just been contemplating. Ireland is "the devil's own quare place," as every genuine Hibernian will readily allow; and certainly if the most whimsical, and sometimes frightful, combinations of the droll and the terrible, the ludicrous and the pathetic, the sublime and the absurd, the noble and the mean, be results reasonably deduced from a nature originally great, but hurled down from the station of its pristine glory, we think our western population may have some claim upon an origin even more ancient, if not more respectable, than that which those veritable chroniclers, Keating and O'Halloran, claim for them. Leaving this question, however, to the antiquarian sages of the Royal Irish Academy, who are best qualified to discuss it, we shall now turn to the books of Sketches, the titles of which we have placed at the commencement of this paper.

Although these publications may be said to have a common subject, yet it has been treated by the respective authors each in their own peculiar manner, and thus, taken together, they present a variety, which he or she who would know Ireland, may study with no small advantage and entertainment. Although two of the books are called "Sketches," and the third "Traits and Stories," none of them is wholly divested of the interest arising from incident, while none of them possesses it to that degree which would, according to our theory, give them that strong and permanent hold upon our attention which such excellent descriptions, if interwoven with a good story, could not fail to obtain; but we shall take them in their order, and that which we have to begin with is in itself a strong illustration of the principles we have laid down; for while it bears upon it the stamp of a higher order of talent than belongs to the authorship of either of the others, yet being much more merely descriptive than they, it will, we doubt not, be laid down, in the perusal, with least regret, and resumed with least interest. The author, who is a most worthy and zealous clergyman, though with very little of the ponderous gravity about him that we sometimes associate with the clerical character, professes to relate to us, in a series of letters, that which his own eyes have seen and his ears heard, in his excursions through the wilds of the North and South of Ireland.

His manner of writing is very singular, and such as no author, from any country in the world save Ireland, could, by any possibility, be supposed to hit upon. He is evidently capable of almost the highest order of descriptive writing; he can be at once energetic and elegant, and not seldom soars into the region of poetry; but in mid career, when accompanying him in his flights, we suddenly encounter some common-place familiarity, some colloquial chat, which rather shocks our sensibilities at the moment, and no sooner do we recover from this, than we as suddenly, and without any sort of "preparation meet," are introduced to some dread solemnity from the Bible, touching the salvation of our souls. Surely our author has lived long enough, and exercised his keen,

and even caustic powers of observation, effectually enough, to know, that things which are exceeding good when taken separately and in their proper place, spoil one another somewhat, when placed in juxta-position, without due regard to natural coherence.

An extract from the beginning of the book will serve as a fair specimen both of its excellencies and defects. The author, after being relieved from the 'tribulation' of the mail-coach at Strabane, hired a jaunting-car to carry him into the highlands of Donegal, a distance of about twenty-two miles. Late at night he arrives at his friend's house, after travelling along roads "almost" impassable, and hills "almost" inaccessible, every joint and ligature of his poor body nearly *jaunted* into dislocation. His friend, who is a brother parson, and an old college chum, hospitably entertains him, and the next day accompanies him on an expedition to the top of a neighbouring mountain, which "rose up like a wall before them, yet up that wall the *road* valiantly climbed; the ponies toiled up it panting and perspiring; it must be a pretty experiment for a carriage to venture on, and, to mend the matter, the road is constructed as a hard causeway, every stone composing it as large as a quartern loaf." They get on, however, tolerably well, admiring the prospect in general, and our author admiring his friend's comfortable leibe-house in particular, as it lay beneath.

"Thus, now and then talking of the prospect, and again caught in our recollections of old college times—times, alas! too much mis-spent, too much misapplied—we at length reached the top of the mountain-ridge, and suddenly turning the point of a cliff that jutted out and checked the road, we came abruptly into a hollow, something like a crater of an extinct volcano, which was filled almost entirely by a lovely lake, on the right-hand side of which rose the highest peak of the mountain, composed of compact silicious sandstone, so bare, so white, so serrated, so tempest-worn, so vexed with all the storms of the Atlantic, that if mere matter could suffer, we might suppose that this lofty and precipitous peak presented the portrait of material endurance; and still, though white was the prevailing colour, yet not one tint or shadowing that decks and paints a mountain's brow was wanting. Here the brown heath, the grey lichen, the green fern, the red crane's-bill; and straight down the cliff, from its topmost peak to the water's edge, was branded in a dark and blasted line, the downward track of a meteoric stone that had fallen from the atmosphere, and shattering itself against the mountain's crest, rolled down in fiery and smoking fragments into the adjacent lake. Last year, amidst the crash of a thunder-storm, this phenomenon occurred, and the well-defined line of its burning progress is, and will be for years, apparent. On the other side of the lake, a fair verdant bank presented itself, courting the traveller to sit down and take his rest, after winding his toilsome way up the long ascent, into this peaceful and unexpected retreat; gentle and grassy knolls were here and there interspersed, on which sheep of most picturesque leanness, some black and some white, with primitive crumpled horns, were grazing. But the lake—not a breath was abroad on its expanse; it smiled as it reflected the grey mountain, and the azure face of Heaven: it seemed as if on this day the spirit of the Atlantic had fallen asleep, and air, earth, and ocean, were celebrating the festival of repose: the waters of the lake, of the colour and clearness of the sky, were

'Blue, darkly, deeply, beautifully blue.'

You could look down a hundred fathoms deep, and still no bottom—speckled trouts floating at immense depths, seemed as if they soared in ether—then the stillness of the whole scene—you seemed lifted, as it were, out of the turmoil of the world into some planetary paradise, into some such place as the Apostle in the Apocalypse was invited to, when the voice said, 'Come up hither.' You might have supposed that sound had no existence here, were it not that now and then a hawk shrieked while cowering over the mountain top, or a lamb bleated beneath, as it ran to its mother. I could have gone to sleep here and dreamt of heaven, purchased for poor sinners like me by a Saviour's blood; I did, at any rate, praise the God of nature and of grace, and drew near to him in Christ, grateful for all his blessings, and all his wonders of creating and redeeming love. But the day was advancing; we had

farther to go, and much to do; and my friend drew me away from my abstraction and repose, that had settled and softened into prayer."

What a singular mixture of ability and odd taste is displayed in this passage: there is nothing to jest at, but much to admire, in the enthusiasm of devotion which seizes upon a pious man when he looks out upon the majesty of nature, from the awful mountain top; but an ill-placed description of it, and the sudden introduction of language adapted only to the solemnity of the offices of devotion, tend, as much as anything can tend, to throw an air of the ludicrous over that to which ludicrous ideas should never approach. It is a pity that eccentricity of this sort should mar what is really excellent. The descriptions of scenery throughout this volume are vivid and powerful; and the little historical episodes, and accounts of the superstitions of the people, very interesting; in the latter we apprehend there is a little exaggeration, not wilful exaggeration we believe, but the warm-hearted author has strong prejudices, and the Irish ragamuffins are so fond of a bit of fun, that when they find a man apt to swallow the extravagant, they 'bam' him, in the finest style imaginable. Upon the whole, however, the author might, with a little trouble, and the exercise of a little cool judgment, make this a very admirable book; and as the first edition must be nearly gone by this time, we recommend this hint to his serious consideration, and his volume to those who wish for a spirited description of the wild scenery of the north and south of Ireland.

Mrs. Hall's "*Sketches of Irish Character*" is a book very different from the last; less ambitious, but more delightful. There is an amiableness in every thing which this lady writes, that at the first view conciliates our favour—a kind and feminine vivacity, combined with a fresh and natural sensibility, gives both liveliness and pathos to her stories, and her knowledge of character, though it neither dives very deeply, nor extends over a very wide surface, is yet very perfect within its sphere. Since Miss Edgeworth has ceased to write, we have seen nothing which comes so near the high excellence of her *Irish Sketches*, as those written by Mrs. Hall; the latter are, indeed, but sketches, while the writings of Miss Edgeworth may with more truth be compared to vigorous and finished drawings, but the genius with which the productions of both are imbued, is very similar. Mrs. Hall's *Sketches* have not the severe good sense, the almost masculine knowledge, the firm grasp of character, which distinguish the writings of Miss Edgeworth, but they have more playful humour, more touching sensibility, more womanly tenderness; and so far as it goes, the first story in her volumes, "*Lilly O'Brien*," is related with as happy a genius as it is almost possible to suppose could be applied to the circumstances of which the narrative consists.

It were to be wished that Mrs. Hall had rather endeavoured to become a worthy successor of Miss Edgeworth, which we think would not have been beyond her powers, than to become an imitator of Miss Mitford, and transfer the plan of that lady's *Village Sketches*, to Irish scenery and manners. The consequence of Mrs. Hall having chosen the latter model has been, that the scope of her book is too contracted, and instead of being presented with "*Sketches of Irish Character*," in the extended sense which we might expect, we have only sketches of such character as the peaceful village of Bannow, in the county of Wexford, and its adjacent neighbourhood afford; but we must again say, for we feel a pleasure in repeating it, that such materials as this limited sphere supplies, are used with singular felicity, and an interest is imparted to

slight details, which only a woman, and a woman of sense and sensibility, could impart to them. The neighbourhood of Bannow was the place where the English first landed in Ireland, in the reign of Henry II.; and either from the original Irish having been completely expelled from this part of the coast, by the more civilized robbers who came to take possession of their soil, or from some other cause which we are not prepared at present to assign, the people thereabouts are much more innocent and simple, than in most other parts of Ireland; they very rarely commit murder for diversion, or display that terrific fierceness of spirit, which in other places mocks at humanity and law, and runs riot in all manner of wildness and wickedness. Yet even here, there is abundance of Irish peculiarity to furnish materiel for Mrs. Hall's clever little stories, and of that kind too, which is perhaps more appropriate to the management of a female author, than circumstances of a deeper and more rugged interest. Instead of giving copious extracts, we recommend every one who has not done so already, to read the first story of these little volumes, which occupies only eighty-five small pages—if they do not give the tribute of some tears and much affection to sweet Lilly O'Brien, then is their heart made of sterner stuff than ours. A brief extract will serve to give some notion of Mrs. Hall's manner of narration. An itinerant dealer in fish and village gossip, relates to a certain old Mrs. Cassidy her discovery respecting the indifference of the old woman's son toward her niece, Lilly O'Brien, whom she wished him to marry.

"Ye mind the thorn hedge where the knock slopes off—Well, the day was hot, and I tired with the heat, and the basket, and one little thing or another; and so down I sits on the shady side, thinkin' o' nothin' at all, *only the crows, the craturs, flying to and fro, feeding the young rawpots that kicked up such a bobbery in their nests wid the hunger*; and of what the priest said from the altar against smuggling, and if he was in right down arnest about it; and then it crossed my mind to be sure how hard it was for a poor lone body, to make an honest bit o' bread these hard times, and the priest himself agin it; well, by'n by, who comes sthreelein up the hill at my back, but your Ned and young Harry Connor: well, I was jist goin to spake, but by grate good luck I held my whisht. Well, the first word I hears was from Ned's own mouth, and they were a good piece off at the time too. "She's always the same," says he, "always—sure I love her as my own sister." "May be more nor that," says Harry, *quite solid*. "Harry," says Ned, solid-like too, "don't go to the fair wid the joke; look, I'd suffer this arm to be burnt to the stump, to do Lilly any good; heart friendship I have for her, and well she deserves it; but no heart love." Wid that, my jewel! I thought Harry Connor 'ud have shook the hand bodily off Ned; and thin I hard Ned say as how he'd like a more dashinger girl for a wife nor his cousin; and thin agin he talked about travelling into foreign parts; and thin they comaraded how Ned 'ud bring them in company thegither as often as he could, and talked a dale o' the dance; and Ned said he never seed the colleen yet he'd like to marry; and Harry's quite done over, for he swore he'd lay down his life for one look o' love from Lilly's eyes; and they kept on talkin' and talkin', and I kept creepin' and creepin' along the ditch, till the road turned: and ye know it was my duty to find the rights of it, and you consarned."

The story ends, as all good stories must end, with the marriage of the heroine, but being in Ireland, there is, with due national propriety, just a glimpse given of a whole cluster of little children, which were the natural result; and in the last paragraph of the tale, we find the same speaker whose story we have just quoted, calling them into tea, in a beautiful burst of that affectionate language, which those who are acquainted with Ireland will at once recognize to be genuine.

"Och, ye craturs, like fairy things, come in to the tay! sure it's not fit for the likes o' ye to be muddlin' in the grass even after y'er daddy, ye born blossoms! ye bames o' joy! ye comforts o' the ould 'ooman's heart! Come all o' ye to y'er own Peggy. Och! 'tis myself must set about fair and asy to make my sowl, and not be

passing my time, like the flowers in May, with the young blossoms of the BANNOW LILLY."

Very different from either of the works we have previously noticed, and indeed from any description of Irish manners we have ever before seen, are the lately published "*Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry*." The book is coarse, vigorous, and true. The delineation of the manners of the very lowest of the population, is given with a minuteness and accurate fidelity that could scarcely be surpassed, but the style of the writer is rugged, and the scenes he describes are too truly drawn, not to be disgusting sometimes, as well as ludicrous. It would have been well for the reputation of his work, if its author had got some person of judicious taste to read it over before he gave it to the public, who might have pruned away, and smoothed, without obliterating, the material parts of his descriptions. There is an offensive air of confidence, and easy impudence, in the manner of the narrator, which reminds us of the manner of one of his own countrymen at a rural fair, who swaggers along the street, in the consciousness of being dressed in better clothes than he is accustomed to, and the unconsciousness of being a little drunk. Even in the brief preface to the book, this disagreeable manner meets us, and there is something about a cudgel for the critics, which, if it be intended for a jest, is a very dull and injudicious one, and if it be not a jest, is still more particularly foolish. The book, however, is one of no ordinary ability, and well worthy to be read by all who would intimately know the manners of the Irish peasantry, and who cannot obtain that knowledge except from books. By many who are but partially acquainted with Ireland, the work will probably not be appreciated as it ought; for there are very few readers of books who have gone down so far into the depths of Irish low life as our author has described; and it is indeed marvellous that one should have been found capable of writing a book at all, who had been intimately associated in such scenes and among such people, as are here faithfully painted—so faithfully, and with such minuteness of detail, that it is quite manifest the sketches could only have been made from a long and close acquaintance with the subjects of them. We have eaten some bushels of potatoes, and drank some churns of buttermilk in Irish cabins ourselves, and therefore have a notion that we are qualified to judge of the merits of a book of this kind; but nevertheless we must own, with that modesty which is natural to us, that we should have lacked knowledge to write it. We feel this, because there are a thousand things which we had certainly seen, but had forgotten, from having only seen them casually, and without repetition, which are here called up again into our memory, by one to whom such things have evidently been familiar for months and years.

It is not merely the curious in national manners, or those who read for the sake of amusement only, that will find advantage from perusing this work, but even the politician, who seeks to discover the causes of the strange political phenomena which Ireland presents, will here find much to instruct him. He will at least see the domestic character of that which produces such anomalous and too frequently terrific public results. He will see around their own hearths, in their works, in their amusements, in their superstitions, and in their education, those strange combinations of frolic and fierceness, of carelessness and cunning, of affection and cruelty, of shrewdness and improvidence, of amiable feeling and devilish passion, which make the Irish character the most to be loved, the most to be feared, and the most difficult to be managed by general rules of government, of any that we have ever heard or read of, in the history of nations and societies of men.

Our author begins his book with a story in which there is a good deal of the humorous and extravagant, which make up the beauty of Irish supernatural stories; and then follow his sketches, with individual characters introduced, so as to give them something of the interest of stories. In all, we have groups of the common people presented to us under different circumstances, and their peculiar manners described, as we have said, with singular minuteness. At "the wedding," before the bridegroom leaves his father's house, a lamentation by the whole family, is, according to custom, set up; the loss of the member of the family who is going to settle elsewhere, is loudly bewailed, in pathetic Irish, and with real tears; but it is not to be inferred that there is any real grief, for immediately after, they are as mad and merry as so many young devils let out to play. The following is given as the English version of the lament uttered by the mother of the bridegroom.

"Oh, Shane Fadh—Shane Fadh, a cushla machree, you're going to break up the ring about your father's hearth, and mine—going to lave us avourneen, for ever, and we hear your light foot and sweet voice, mornin', noon, and night, no more. Oh, it's you that was the good son all out—and the good brother too: kind and cheerful was your beautiful voice, and full of love and affection was your heart! Shane, avourneen deelish, if ever I was harsh to you, forgive your poor mother that will never see you more on her flure, as one of her own family." "Even my father," (the narrative goes on,) "that wasn't much given to crying, couldn't speak, but went over to a corner, and cried 'till the neighbours stopped him. As for my brothers and sisters they were all in an uproar; and I myself, begad! cried like a Trojan, merely bekase I see them at it. My father and mother both kissed me, and gave me their blessing, and my brothers and sisters did the same; while you would think all their hearts would break."

In the midst of all this, an old uncle breaks in with some uproarious fun, which soon changes their tears to laughter.

"Any how, its easy knowing that *there wasn't sorrow at the bottom of their grief*, for they were all now laughing at my uncle's jokes, even while their eyes were red with the tears."

There was much drinking of whiskey on their way to chapel to be married, and on returning from it;—then a row, and dreadful beating of one another, which, after some bloodshed, is put an end to by the priest breaking in, and flogging them with a whip;—the quarrel is made up on the spot, they are more affectionate friends than ever, and a great rural dinner is sat down to, at which the priest takes a conspicuous place. At the dinner, an itinerant begging friar—sleek and jolly, and cunning in his craft—makes his appearance, and the colloquy between him and the secular priest of the parish—the hits at one another, half in bitterness and half in fun, yet with caution, to prevent the people from learning too much of their opinions, are admirably managed. Any one who has lived amongst the Irish, knows that in joking repartee they are quite admirable and inexhaustible; but it is much easier to know this, and to state the fact, than to give examples of it, with such truth and effect as are afforded by these volumes.

The sketch called "The Battle of the factions," gives a view of the more dark and dreadful features of the character of the Irish peasantry. The story, which is one of some interest, and the descriptions striking and vigorous, brings the reader on to the fair day in a country town.

"The day was dark and sunless, but sultry. On looking through the crowd, I could see no man without a cudgel, yet what was strange, there was no certainty of *any sport*. Several desultory skirmishes had locality, but they were altogether sequestered from the great factions of the O's. Except that it was pleasant, and stirred one's blood to look at them, or occasioned the cudgels to be grasped more

firmly, there was no personal interest felt by any of us in them, they therefore began, and ended here and there through the fair, like mere flashes in the pan, dying in their own smoke."

"Up till four o'clock that day, the factions were quiet. Several relations on both sides had been invited to drink by John and Rose's families, for the purpose of establishing a good feeling between them. But this was after all hardly to be expected, for they hated one another with an ardency much too good humoured and buoyant, and, between ourselves, to bring Paddy over a bottle, is a very equivocal mode of giving him an anticudgelling disposition. After the hour of four, several of the factions were getting very friendly, which I knew at the time to be a bad sign. Many of them nodded to each other, which I knew to be a worse one; and some of them shook hands with the greatest cordiality, which I no sooner saw, than I unslipped the knot of my cravat, and held myself in preparation for the sport."

The frantic joy which possesses the Irish peasant, half mad, and generally half drunk, when he sees the fight begin, is thus described:

"His eye is lit with real glee, he tosses his hat in the air, in the height of mirth—and leaps like a mountebank two yards from the ground. Then, with what a gracious dexterity he brandishes his cudgel, what a joyous spirit is heard in his shout, at the face of a friend, from another faction! His very whoo! is contagious, and would make a man that had settled on running away, return and join the sport, with an appetite truly Irish."

Our readers are doubtless aware, that this "sport" generally ends in violent death to some, and in horrible wounds and bruises to a great many. A very animated description of a dreadful affray between the two contending factions that occupied the fair that day, follows the extract we have given. There is an attempt made to describe by words, the uproar, and cracking of the sticks against one another, and against the pates of the combatants, concurrently with the description of the battle and its events. This is too much, and makes that ludicrous, which would otherwise be terrible.

It would take up far too much space, to give an account of all the sketches in these volumes. They are written with nearly equal vigour, minuteness, and coarseness; that of the "Hedge School" will, we think, be the newest to our readers in general, and perhaps the most instructive as a subject for serious reflection, in the book. The worst of it is, that it will not be fully understood, or at all events its force will not be *felt*, except by those who have had a glimpse of the original from which the picture is drawn. The manner in which the grave gentleman from Cambridge is questioned, and bantered, and made to appear ridiculous, by the two hedge schoolmasters, in the face of their whole ragged regiment of scholars, is an admirable specimen of the power of this kind, which the lower orders of our countrymen possess.

It has long been the complaint, and the just complaint of the Irish, that their brethren of Great Britain, who exercise so much authority over them, know scarcely any thing about them. Certainly not so much as they know of the people of France and Germany. A few years ago this might be said to be owing to the apathy of the Irish themselves, who had given nothing to the world—the literary world at all events—by which their country, its character, and manners might be generally known wherever books were read. This reproach we are fast taking away. Several excellent novels have been written, which present fair and interesting portraits of the manners of the people, and the volumes of sketches, which we have in this article successively noticed, will give to all who will take the trouble to read for information, enough of knowledge to form some general judgment respecting a country, with the destinies of which those of Great Britain are becoming every day more closely united.

We cannot say so much for the novels of the Messieurs Banim: they represent neither the thing that hath been, nor that which shall be, and on the showing of the authors themselves, they have nothing to say to that which is. The last set of these novels is entitled, oddly enough, "The Denounced;" for what reason is not very apparent, save that the heroes and heroines are for the most part suffering "mimbers" of the holy Roman church, smarting under the inconveniences of British penal disabilities. This was all mighty well once upon a time, in the good "ould" days of protestant ascendancy in church and state; but now that the Roman road is the aptest way to assistant barristerships, and even silken gowns, and we poor persecuted protestants, whose thousands per annum are so well secured that there's no getting at them, shiver in our skins at the sight of a Roman sheriff, now that the time of our wealth is passed away, and the hour of our tribulation is come, we must say that we think the loud cry after the sore blow, somewhat superfluous and naughty. The Messrs. Banim tell us, to be sure, in an introduction, or preface, in which with a beautiful union of originality and clearness of metaphor, they dilate upon the "last *festerling links*" of "the old rusty chain of legal disability," that the tales were begun, and even ended before the question of emancipation "became unexpectedly decided:" in consequence of this decision, the said tales are with singular propriety and modesty dedicated to ARTHUR DUKE OF WELLINGTON. Doubtless his grace of Waterloo will feel a degree of gratitude corresponding to so flattering a mark of distinction and regard. The volumes contain two stories; the first is called "The Last Baron of Crana;" a tale of the times when William and the popish James fought for the crown of Ireland, and arising more immediately out of the battle of Anghrim, misspelled Aughrim, throughout the book. Next to the whining tone, and the marks of the beast, and the ignorance of old Irish story, and the horrible blunders about names, &c. in which the authors might almost, though not altogether, contest the palm with Miladi Morgan herself, and certainly would prove formidable rivals to the Smith novelists in England, the thing that most offends us throughout the tales is, their utter and irredeemable vulgarity. The "Traits and Stories" are evidently written by a very vulgar person too, but there is this difference between the charter-school man's coarseness, and the Roman writer's efforts at being genteel, that the former keeps entirely to low life in his descriptions of character and manners, whereas in the latter, we have baron this, and my lady that, and captain t'other, uttering the most vile phrases, such as any well bred fishing-tackle man would turn away his nursery governess for uttering. *Ye*, is continually used for you, and *abroad*, to signify out of doors. The *de jure* baron of Crana addresses his brother, "Phil *ma-chree*," to which the *de facto* peer responds, "Roger *dear*;" the sister of the said baron (being unmarried, and as pert a brogueaneer as you could expect to meet in a convent, smelling of bread and butter,) is called *Lady Dorcas*, and is my ladyfied, and your ladyshipped to the end of the chapter; moreover, she says and does a multitude of things *gleishly*: in Scotland this would mean "with a squint;" with its precise signification in English we cannot pretend to be acquainted. But the greatest beauty in the whole of this tale, is perhaps the names of the two principal parties, O'Burke and Pendergast. Now, we flatter ourselves we know some little about the "ra'al ould" Irish names, and if the authors (who, over and over again, lay great stress on the *name* of the O'Burkes and others,) will ferret out a single instance of either of these names occurring in the realm of Ireland, from

the time that Adam wore his first green breeches to the present year of grace one thousand eight hundred and thirty, we shall undertake, in return, to set out on a pilgrimage in search of some of the interesting relics of that chain they wot of, whose links are at once festering and rusty. The name referred to is de Burgo, (evidently mistaken by the writers for one of the old Irish names,) which was sometimes translated into Mac William, but never corrupted into either O'Burke, or Mac Burke. The other is a mistake for Prendergast; moreover, none of the Prendergasts ever settled in Ulster, the province in which the captain is fixed. But these are trifles unworthy of the notice of men who make Carolan a renowned musician at the time of the battle of the Boyne.

Throughout this story there is a certain John Sharpe, a northern, the servant of captain Prendergast, and a more insufferable bore than he and his pipe, both being described about forty thousand times, never afflicted an ill-told tale. He speaks a dialect which the writers possibly mistook for Scotch, or northern Irish. There are withal, some powerful descriptions in this part of the book, and several detached scenes exhibiting no ordinary vigour of pencil. The treaty of Limerick, and its alleged infraction, are treated of with due tediousness and indiscretion.

The concluding story, "The Conformists," we like, on the whole, considerably better; though here again we have nothing but the miserable condition of the suffering papists, from the penal statutes of the good queen Anne. The hero is a great, lubberly, stubborn, pot-headed boy, with hempen hair, (the author indeed calls his head *flaxen*, but though he was a ploughboy, this is a mistake,) and huge staring saucer eyes, who falls in love before he can spell his name, or depict even the remotest similitude of pothooks and hangers. The frowardness of this headstrong puppy, forms the staple of the tale, and is depicted with a good deal of truth and humour; all this is intended to exemplify the evil consequences resulting from that enactment, which forbade a Roman catholic teacher to exercise his functions, whereby the lad was left to such small deer in the literary line, as his father and mother could teach him to catch. Again, to exemplify the evils of another odious statute, (we trust in God, and for the honour of Roman catholic human nature, that it was never really acted upon,) he describes this young scoundrel as nominally conforming to the protestant religion, at the instigation of a wicked attorney, for the purpose of gaining possession of his father's house and lands; after reading his recantation, he is represented as hurrying out to the grounds about his father's house, to watch the results of this crowning atrocity.

While thus employed, like the devil in paradise, spying and peeping round the dwelling of innocence and peace, which he was about to mar and desolate, he sees the attorney, the sheriff, and a posse of armed men, advancing to turn the present occupants out of the mansion, which by his nefarious villainy he had that morning made his own. We give as much as we can of what follows in the author's own words, and we really wish we had room for more.

"In a short time, however, loud voices within the house aroused his attention; he could distinguish those of his brother Marks and 'orney Doolly, in violent altercation. Then his mother spoke, in the low, shivering, heart-cutting tones of female submission under a great sorrow, mixed with the dignified self-assertion of a lady. A pause ensued; once broken by screams from Nancy of a more terrific kind than those she had before uttered, and, it seemed, suppressed by Mrs. D'Arcy's remonstrance; and presently succeeded a strange noise of stamping feet through the house; and then in Hugh D'Arcy's bed-room, a struggling and talking of many persons,

and a scraping, occasionally, of something heavy along the boards. 'They are dragging him out to me in his coffin!' thought Daniel. The same noises came down the stairs, and into the hall; Daniel fixed his straining eyes on the hall-door. First Nancy rushed out; Marks followed, bearing his paralyzed father in a chair; Mrs. D'Arcy, leaning on Mr. Donovan, who also supported his daughter Helen, trod close behind. Daniel's whole soul was now momentarily occupied in endeavouring to comprehend this unexpected vision of his father.

"With the zealous and desperate exertion of his whole strength, Marks tottered under the weight of the crippled old man, and laid him down just outside the door, it would seem from inability to proceed. As he did so, 'A moment, here, good attorney Doolly,' he said.

"'Only one moment, sir,' pleaded Mrs. D'Arcy, 'to wet his lips, and rest my son, and we shall soon be on the road with him;' and while she spoke, the miserable lady, suppressing every tear that gathered to burst forth, and compelling her fine features into the calm of a breaking heart, stepped slowly to her insensible husband, wiped the damp from his forehead with her handkerchief, stooped and kissed it, and then knelt to drop some cordial out of a vial upon his poor smiling lips.

"'And when we shall be quite out of view, attorney,' she continued, 'and when the new owner of the house comes to claim the key of the door you are now putting up for him so carefully, tell him, sir, that his mother knelt down in every room of his old home, and almost on the threshold, wishing and trying to curse him, but could not; but that, instead, after all he has done, they were bless—blessings that came——' Mrs. D'Arcy's endeavours were not longer able to suppress the outbreak of her heart, and she interrupted herself in agonies.

"Had the case not been so, she would have otherwise experienced an interruption. At the moment, Daniel came like a wild beast from his lair straight upon attorney Doolly, and crying 'Give me *that*, man!' twisted the key of the hall-door out of the hand of his careful friend. 'What's all this?' he continued, unlocking and throwing the door open—'who daared to do this?—and what's the matter, father, dear, with you? and, if it's so sick you are, why don't you keep to the bed?' In the course of uttering these words, he caught up by its arms the easy chair in which Hugh D'Arcy sat, and, as if he but dandled a child, ran into the house with the pious load under which his elder brother had stumbled. The astonished spectators were greatly startled, after the father and son had disappeared in the hall, to hear the old man exclaim, 'Dan! is it yourself, Dan, my boy?' and still more so with Daniel's answer, preceded by a laugh; 'Ah! aha, father! I've cured you, have I? but I'll cure you better; first lie down in your bed, up stairs: come, father!'

Of course the poor attorney, (your attorney stands a bad chance in novels somehow,) is knocked all to shivers by a certain *cute* Mr. Mossop, which gives Mr. Banim another opportunity of railing in good set terms upon the divers and many legal disabilities under which the hapless Romans laboured "in them days," as Miss Bourke happily expresses it. Finally, he would have us quite reconciled to master Daniel, and leave him in the greatest good humour in the world, to be accounted a sort of benefactor to the family, and to be happily married to a harmless chit of a girl, one Dora Donovan, because forsooth he relented a bit during the execution of his enormous villainy, and said, "what's the matter, father dear," and tumbled up stairs with the old gentleman in his arms. This is the sort of honouring his father and his mother, for which our author thinks his days ought to be long in the land! The infernal young imp of Satan! and for all his perjury, cold-blooded treachery, and all but double parricide, a few unmanly drops of salt and womanish embraces, are to be a plenary expiation! No, no, Mr. Banim, we are no believers in the popish doctrine of attrition; we shall grant him absolution on no such terms, and though he blubbered a tub full of crocodile tears, like a whimpering, snivelling, sneaking scoundrel as he is, we should hang the arch-ruffian on a gallows higher by a span than Haman's, instead of sending him to bed, as you do, with Dora Donovan.